

Equality & Diversity Hot Topic - October 2011

Black History Month

October is Black History Month and Lancashire County Council will, as usual, be celebrating with a variety of events throughout the county. For further details visit Click Lancashire at: www.clicklancashire.com/culture

It's a great time to research Black history, either here in Britain or throughout the world! Here are some things that you may want to look into in more detail:

Did you know that black people have lived in Britain since about the 12th Century?

Or that a medieval queen of England is purported to have been black? Philippa of Hainault was married to King Edward III of England in January 1328 and historians still argue over her racial heritage. During marriage negotiations Philippa was described as 'of brown skin all over like her father' and her first son is well known in history books as Edward, the Black Prince.

Or that Ignatius Sancho was the first black British writer to be published? Sancho was born on a slave ship in 1729 and orphaned soon after. He arrived in England at the age of two and, eventually, thrived under the patronage of the Montagu family, writing prose, poetry and music. He became popular with London's literary and artistic set and had his portrait painted by Gainsborough in 1768.



Bringing us a bit more up to date, last night (5th October) saw the latest MOBO (Music of Black Origin) awards ceremony in Glasgow. Research the influence of black artists on your favourite music!

If you prefer football to music you'll be looking forward to the Montenegro game on Friday. Did you know that Viv Anderson was the first black player to appear in an England team? Or that Paul Ince was the first black man to captain the side: in a game against the USA on 9th June 1993?

Moving away from Britain, let's take a look at four famous figures from black history. Do you recognise the faces?



Mohandas Gandhi is more commonly known as Mahatma (great soul). He was born in 1869 in Gujarat, India. After training as a barrister in London he spent 20 years fighting South African injustice before supporting his own people in their 'fight' against British occupation. He dominated Indian politics for a time, was imprisoned and released, represented the Indian National Congress and was assassinated in 1948.

The only one of the four still living is **Nelson Mandela**. After qualifying in law in 1942, Mandela became a political activist within the African National Congress (ANC). In 1964 he was sentenced to life imprisonment where he eventually became an international symbol of resistance to apartheid. After his release on 11th February 1990 he went on to become leader of the ANC, then president of South Africa.

Born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, **Martin Luther King, Jr.** led the civil rights movement in the United States from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. King has remained the most widely known African American leader of his era, with a U.S. national holiday each year in his honour. A memorial stands at the site of his famous "I Have A Dream" speech in Washington D.C.

Many historians claim that 1st December 1955 was the beginning of the civil rights movement in the United States. That was the day when **Rosa Parkes** was arrested and fined after refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. When Rosa died in 2005 she became the first woman and the second black person to lie in state at the Capitol, an honour usually reserved for presidents.

Other October dates for your E&D diaries are:

1st October..... International Day of Older Persons

17th October World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty

24th October United Nations Day

October also contains religious festivals from the Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Jewish, Baha'i and Christian calendars.